

# Arts in the Parks

## Versailles State Park Property Profile

**Website:** <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2963.htm>

### Key Messages/Stories:

- In August 1934, during the Great Depression, the National Park Service announced plans to develop a federal park on 1,700 of marginal Ripley County farmland. By April 1943, the National Park Service deeded the property to the State of Indiana, and the “Versailles Project” became Versailles State Park, Indiana’s second largest state park. Today the park includes 5,988 acres.
- Cultural History: The Civilian Conservation Corps, Company 596, known as President Franklin Roosevelt’s “tree army” consisted of over 200 men who developed the park through tree planting, native stone masonry and wood construction, road construction and path work, watershed and erosion control, and water construction projects. These CCC enrollees constructed shelters, 15 barracks, a mess hall, an administration building and a recreation building to house the boys ranging from age 18 to 28 years old. Most of their original work is still present throughout much of Versailles State Park.
- Cultural History: Running directly through the park is Laughery Creek, named after Col. Archibald Lochry, a Revolutionary War soldier. In 1871, Col. Lochry and his men were traveling down the Ohio River to meet with George Rogers Clark at the Falls of the Ohio. Before they arrived, the soldiers died in a battle with Native Americans where Laughery Creek enters the Ohio River, just south of Aurora, Indiana.
- Natural beauty-Scenic beauty: Over time Laughery Creek has cut its way through Silurian reef limestone, creating rugged cliffs and exposing fossil-rich, 475 million-year-old Ordovician rock. Throughout many of the park’s creeks, hikers will find fossils, including bryozoans, brachiopods, coral and crinoids. Numerous sinkholes and associated springs point to an extensive underground drainage system that dominates the park.
- Natural beauty-Scenic beauty: The park’s beautiful hardwood forest includes oak, hickory, maple, beech, tulip poplar, black walnut which are common to its 5,988 acres. Also providing expansive habitats for songbirds and a variety of wildlife.

### Top Five Things to Do:

- Camping
- Boating and fishing – bring your kayak, canoe or john boat and don’t forget your fishing pole.
- Hike any of our hiking trails such as Trail 1, Old Forest 2.25 miles, Trail 2 Orchard 2.75 miles, and Trail 3 Fallen Timbers Creek 1.5 miles or ride up to 17 miles of mountain bike trails.
- Take a splash at our swimming pool with water slide.
- Visit our seasonal nature center, open June, July or August. View the CCC structures such as Oak Grove shelter or visit our historic group camp where many of the men slept while construction of the park was taking place.

**Lodging:** Campsites are available. All campsites accommodate tent or travel trailers with at least 30 amp electrical service and modern restrooms with shower facilities.



**General visitor profile:** Campers (weekends or weeklong); day-users for picnics, hiking, mountain bike riding, swimming, horseback riding, fishing, boating; visiting the nature center; school groups in spring; scout and other groups for volunteer service; groups in the group camps; friends group: campground hosts.

**Potential arts venues:**

- Oak Grove Shelter
- Schimmerhorn Shelter

**Visitation in FY2014:** 265,000

**Nearby Communities:** Osgood, Milan, Batesville, Sunman, Greensburg, Aurora, Lawrenceburg, North Vernon, Madison

Please email questions to [Artsintheparks@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:Artsintheparks@dnr.IN.gov).

